

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1. (Currently Amended) A method for removing leukocytes comprising ~~causing passing~~ a leukocyte-containing liquid ~~to pass~~ through a leukocyte removal filter comprising nonwoven fabric having an average fiber diameter of 0.3 to 3.0 μm to remove leukocytes from the leukocyte-containing liquid and to obtain a leukocyte-free liquid, ~~and further comprising using the~~ nonwoven fabric having a formation index y of 50 or less corresponding to a thickness of 0.3 mm .

Claim 2. (Original) The method for removing leukocytes according to claim 1, wherein the nonwoven fabric has a filling rate of 0.05 to 0.30.

Claim 3. (Currently Amended) The method for removing leukocytes according to claim 1, wherein ~~the nonwoven fabric has a formation index y of 50 or less corresponding to a thickness of 0.3 mm, and y satisfies the following inequality[[.]]:~~

$$y < -4 \times \text{average fiber diameter of nonwoven fabric } (\mu\text{m}) + 55.$$

Claim 4. (Previously Presented) The method for removing leukocytes according to claim 1, wherein the nonwoven fabric is obtained by using a melt-blown method.

Claim 5. (Currently Amended) The method for removing leukocytes according to claim 1, ~~comprising using a wherein the~~ leukocyte removal filter ~~comprising~~ comprises at least one of a filter for removing aggregate upstream of the nonwoven fabric ~~and/or and~~ a post-filter downstream of the nonwoven fabric.

Claim 6. (Previously Presented) The method for removing leukocytes according to claim 1, wherein the leukocyte removal filter is a flat filter having an inlet and an outlet for liquid.

Claim 7. (Previously Presented) The method for removing leukocytes according to claim 1, wherein the leukocyte removal filter is a cylindrical filter having an inlet and an outlet for liquid.

Claim 8. (Original) The method for removing leukocytes according to claim 6, wherein a container of the leukocyte removal filter is formed of a flexible resin.

Claim 9. (Currently Amended) The method for removing leukocytes according to claim 1, ~~[[comprising: causing]]~~ wherein the leukocyte-containing liquid ~~selected from~~ comprises whole blood, red cell concentrate, platelet concentrate, platelet rich plasma, ~~and~~ or platelet poor plasma to pass through the leukocyte removal filter.

Claim 10. (Currently Amended) The method for removing leukocytes according to claim 1, comprising ~~[[:]] causing~~ passing the leukocyte-containing liquid ~~to pass~~ through the leukocyte removal filter by utilizing head drop.

Claim 11. (Currently Amended) The method for removing leukocytes according to claim 1, comprising ~~causing~~ passing the leukocyte-containing liquid ~~to pass~~ through the leukocyte removal filter by at least one of increasing pressure of ~~[[the]]~~ an inlet side of the leukocyte removal filter ~~and/or~~ and reducing pressure of ~~[[the]]~~ an outlet side of the leukocyte removal filter.

Claim 12. (Currently Amended) The method for removing leukocytes according to claim 1, comprising: performing extracorporeal circulation by continuously collecting whole blood from a body of a patient, ~~causing~~ passing the collected whole blood ~~to pass~~ through the leukocyte removal filter, and returning the leukocyte-free whole blood to the body of the patient.

Claims 13-24 (Canceled)

Claim 25. (Original) A leukocyte removal filter for a leukocyte removal method for removing leukocytes from a leukocyte-containing liquid, comprising: nonwoven fabric having an average fiber diameter of 0.3 to 3.0 μm and a formation index y of 50 or less corresponding to a thickness of 0.3 mm.

Claim 26. (Original) The leukocyte removal filter according to claim 25, wherein the nonwoven fabric has a filling rate of 0.05 to 0.30.

Claim 27. (Currently Amended) The leukocyte removal filter according to claim 25, wherein ~~the nonwoven fabric has a formation index y of 50 or less corresponding to a thickness of 0.3 mm, and y satisfies the following inequality[[.]]:~~

$$y < -4 \times \text{average fiber diameter of nonwoven fabric } (\mu\text{m}) + 55$$

Claim 28. (Previously Presented) The leukocyte removal filter according to claim 25, wherein the nonwoven fabric is obtained by using a melt-blown method.

Claim 29. (Currently Amended) A leukocyte removal filter according to claim 25, comprising ~~[[:]]~~ at least one of a filter for removing aggregate upstream of the nonwoven fabric ~~according to claim 25 and/or~~ and a post-filter downstream of the nonwoven fabric.

Claim 30. (Previously Presented) The leukocyte removal filter according to claim 25, comprising a flat filter having an inlet and an outlet for liquid.

Claim 31. (Previously Presented) The leukocyte removal filter according to claim 25, comprising a cylindrical filter having an inlet and an outlet for liquid.

Claim 32. (Original) The leukocyte removal filter according to claim 30, wherein a container of the filter is formed of a flexible resin.

Claim 33. (Previously Presented) The leukocyte removal filter according to claim 25, wherein the leukocyte removal filter is used constructed to remove leukocytes from ~~[[the]]~~ a leukocyte-containing liquid ~~selected from~~ comprising whole blood, red cell concentrate, platelet concentrate, platelet rich plasma, ~~and or~~ or platelet poor plasma.

Claim 34. (Currently Amended) A blood extracorporeal circulation device for blood, comprising ~~[[:]]~~ at least the leukocyte removal filter according to claim 25.

Claim 35. (Currently Amended) A blood extracorporeal circulation device for blood, comprising at least the leukocyte removal filter according to claim 25; an inlet for introducing whole blood collected from a body of a patient into the leukocyte removal filter; and an outlet for returning the leukocyte-free whole blood to the body of the patient.

Claim 36. (New) The method for removing leukocytes according to claim 1, wherein the nonwoven fabric is further obtained by a melt-blown method and has a filling rate of 0.05 to 0.30 and satisfies the following inequality:

$$y < -4 \times \text{average fiber diameter of nonwoven fabric } (\mu\text{m}) + 55.$$

Claim 37. (New) The method for removing leukocytes according to claim 1, comprising passing the leukocyte-containing liquid through the leukocyte removal filter by utilizing head drop or by increasing pressure of the inlet side of the leukocyte removal filter and/or reducing pressure of the outlet side of the leukocyte removal filter; and

wherein the nonwoven fabric is further obtained by a melt-blown method and has a filling rate of 0.05 to 0.30 and satisfies the following inequality:

$$y < -4 \times \text{average fiber diameter of nonwoven fabric } (\mu\text{m}) + 55.$$

Claim 38. (New) The leukocyte removal filter of claim 25, wherein the nonwoven fabric is obtained by a melt-blown method and has a filling rate of 0.05 to 0.30 and satisfies the following inequality:

$$y < -4 \times \text{average fiber diameter of nonwoven fabric } (\mu\text{m}) + 55.$$